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Lucas  
DeJesus



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Richard  
Hill



Amy  
Hochstetler



Michael  
Johnson<sup>o^</sup>



Elissa  
Kranzler<sup>^\*</sup>



Nathan  
Lofton<sup>\*</sup>



Cortlandt  
Matthews<sup>^\*</sup>



Hank  
Miller



Rebekah  
Reddi



Jordan  
Rock<sup>\*</sup>



Rebecca  
Roy



Eddie  
Rubeiz<sup>^</sup>



Lizzy  
Schwartz



Melinda  
Steffy



Emily  
Sung<sup>^\*</sup>



Caroline  
Winschel<sup>o</sup>



Michele  
Zuckman<sup>^</sup>

With Robert A. M. Ross.

<sup>^</sup>denotes conductor

<sup>\*</sup>denotes Board

<sup>o</sup>denotes founding singer

## Chestnut Street Singers The Northern Wild

November 18 • Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill  
November 19 • First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia

### under foot

**Lähtö** Einojuhani Rautavaara (1928–2016)

**Tasase maa laul** Veljo Tormis (1930–2017)

**Peegeldused tasasest maast** Tõnu Kõrvits (b. 1969)  
*Julia Morelli, cello*

**Helletused** Veljo Tormis  
*Rebekah Reddi, soprano, and Caroline Winschel, soprano*

**Rakastava** Jean Sibelius (1865–1957)  
*Jordan Rock, baritone, and Rebecca Roy, mezzo-soprano*

**My love dwelt in a Northern land** Edward Elgar (1857–1934)  
*intermission*

### over head

**Northern Lights** Ēriks Ešenvalds (b. 1977)  
*Richard Hill, tenor, and Julia Morelli, crotales*

**Mountain Nights** Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967)

**Sun** R. Murray Schafer (b. 1933)

**Stars** Ēriks Ešenvalds

*Please join us after the program for refreshments.*

## Notes on the Program

It's easy to assemble a loose program of music by northern-ish composers and have it sound pretty cool. Heck, we'll even admit we've done that before. So in an effort to bring you a cohesive program, we searched for a musical kernel that would make a concert of subarctic music hold together in a compelling way. In that search, we realized that our favorite music by composers like Veljo Tormis, Jean Sibelius, and Eriks Ešenvalds simply sounds like it couldn't come from anywhere else in the world.

This is not to say that all the music we'll sing today sounds the same—far from it. Tormis's folk roots could not be more different from the cerebral soundscapes of R. Murray Schafer, while Sibelius and his contemporary Edward Elgar teeter on the threshold between the late romantic and early modern. But despite all these differences in content and style, the wild North is the irreplaceable central character in all of today's program. This music is grounded in visceral explorations of what it is like to be in the North, with the wild earth beneath one's feet and under the unwavering watch of the same celestial bodies for months on end.

There is a loneliness in the way much of this music stretches out like the untouched lands and vast skies it evokes. But in regions still dominated by primal forces, there is great joy in making singular human connections—with a neighboring cowherd across acres of pasture, with a lover thought lost over the hillside, or simply with oneself in the stillness of the pines. These connections are why we sing together, and why we are so glad to have you here with us today.

### Lähtö

We begin with Einojuhani Rautavaara's "Lähtö," or "Departure," which perfectly captures the venturesome feeling of setting off for places unknown. Like all Finnish composers, Rautavaara works in Sibelius's long shadow—indeed, he studied and later taught at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki—but here brings in echoes of other musical traditions. In "Lähtö," we are urged onwards by the constant percussive gallop underlying the melody. The melody itself makes use of a Middle Eastern-sounding alteration between the natural and lowered second, creating a tenuous balance between major and minor tonality and hinting at the far-off promise of the narrator's departure.

*Text by Toivo Pekkanen (1902–1957)*

Jonakin aamuna,  
jonakin kevätaamuna  
auringon kohotessa taivaalle  
nousen ratsuni selkään.  
Ruumiini nukkuu,  
henkeni ei kuule askeleitani  
eikä hevoseni kavioitten  
riemuitsevaa töminää.  
Ratsun selkään nousee  
ahdistettu, piinattu,

One morning,  
one spring morning  
the sun rising into the sky  
I mount my steed.  
My body sleeps,  
my spirit hears not my step  
nor the jubilant clatter  
of my horse's hooves.  
Mounting the horse is an  
anguished, tormented soul,

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Our sincere thanks to those who have supported us this year.

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## Stars

Ešenvalds again employs tuned water glasses to evoke heavenly imagery in his setting of Sara Teasdale's "Stars." Commissioned in 2012 by the Salt Lake Choral Artists, the piece employs a lush, divisi texture throughout to complement the warm but fragile tones of the water-tuned glasses. Favoring changes in texture over large-scale harmonic development, "Stars" is paradoxically static and ever-moving. May it remind you of gazing at the night sky, recognizing that each unwavering speck of light is in fact a massive, dynamic system in its own right, separated from us by hundreds of thousands of light-years.

*Text by Sara Teasdale (1884–1933)*

Alone in the night  
On a dark hill  
With pines around me

Spicy and still,  
And a heaven full of stars  
Over my head  
White and topaz

And misty red;  
Myriads with beating  
Hearts of fire  
The aeons

Cannot vex or tire;  
Up the dome of heaven  
Like a great hill  
I watch them marching

Stately and still.  
And I know that I  
Am honored to be  
Witness  
Of so much majesty.



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tuhat kertaa rangaistu,  
mutta murtumaton,  
ikuisesti elävä.  
Minä yksin tiedän tämän  
aamun salaisuuden.  
Minun kutsuani yksin  
hevoseni tottelee.  
Minä yksin näen lunastuksen tien.  
Siis ylpeään juoksuun,  
uskoni kultainen ratsu.  
Vain hetken kumisevat  
kaviot kattojen yllä.  
Olen jo kaukana,  
vapautettu.

a thousand times punished,  
yet invincible,  
immortal.  
I alone know the secret  
this morning holds.  
Mine alone is the command  
the horse obeys.  
I alone see the path to redemption.  
Gallop with pride, then,  
golden steed of my faith!  
For a mere moment will these  
hooves be heard over the rooftops.  
Soon I am far off,  
and free.

## Tasase maa laul

Veljo Tormis is widely regarded as one of the most important Estonian composers of the twentieth century. Keenly attentive to the importance of folksong in Estonian culture, Tormis frequently explained his work by averring, "I do not use folksong. It is folk music that uses me." He served as a kind of medium for his country's folk traditions, channeling the tunes that his people preserved during generations of Soviet occupation into spellbinding modern constructions. Deeply influenced by his predecessors Bartók and Kodály, who were similarly identified with the folk traditions of their native Hungary, Tormis built rich, often-symphonic choral textures around folk tunes in their original form, as opposed to using only their melodic ideas as building blocks for motivic development. "Tasase maa laul," or "Song About the Level Land," offers us a classic glimpse into the sound world and folk narratives that characterize Tormis's music. Framed around text by an Estonian poet-turned-politician, this short but evocative piece for a *cappella* men's choir describes the beckoning of "the level land," which draws the listener home as powerfully "as a Moselem to Mecca."

*Text by Paul-Eerik Rummo (b. 1942)*

Siin oled kasvanud.  
Tasasel maal.  
Siit on su rahu ja tasakaal.

*Translated by Terje Treiman and Enn Soosar*

It is where you have grown up.  
On the level land.  
Your calm and steadiness come from here.

Munamägi on pilvepiir.

The hill of Munamägi determines  
the height of the clouds.

Pilv on madal ja hall nagu hiir.

Your clouds are low and grey  
like a mouse.

Maailma pilet su kätte an ti.

A ticket to the world was given to you.

Maailm on lahti mõndagi kanti.

The world is opened up to you in  
several directions.

Tõsiste seenemetsade sekka  
ikka kuid tuled kui musulman Mekka.

However, you will return to serious forests,  
full of mushrooms, as a Moselem to Mecca.

Siin oled sündinud tasasel maal.

It is where you were born.

On the level country.

Siin on su rahu ja tasakaal.

Your calm and steadiness are here.

### Peegeldused tasasest maast

Tormis's status as the beloved godfather of Estonian singing means that his work now inspires a new generation of composers, just as he once sought resonance in the familiar folk tunes of his youth. Tõnu Kõrvits, a rising star of Estonian contemporary music, represents that new generation: he is known for music that brings listeners on a journey through natural, allegorical, mythical, and fantastical landscapes. His writing covers traditional genres in orchestral, solo instrumental, solo vocal, choral, and operatic music, as well as works that branch into more unconventional sound worlds. Like Tormis before him, Kõrvits's choral compositions are deeply inspired by Estonian and Northern European folk music and culture. "Peegeldused tasasest maast," or "Reflections from a Plain Land," takes Tormis's "Tasase maa laul" as its starting point. Kõrvits reshapes the older composer's themes in a more nostalgic mode, with the choir creating a wordless, ethereal landscape through which a solitary cello voice journeys.

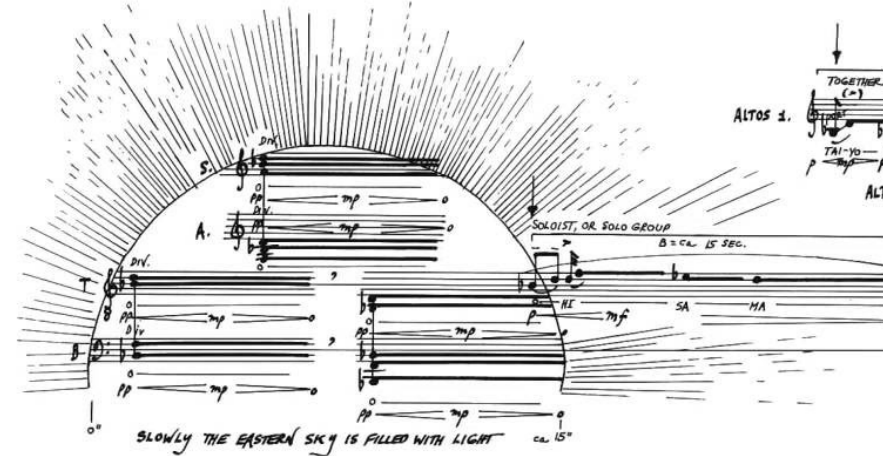
### Helletused

"Helletused," which means "childhood memory," draws us deeply into the Estonian folk tradition and Tormis's innovations therein. The "childhood memory" to which Tormis refers is in fact a national one: in rural Estonia, school-age children share the responsibilities of tending to their families' livestock, and each family develops a unique call with which to herd their animals. Because the calls differ by family, the children use their calls not just to control cattle and sheep but also to howdy their friends in distant pastures.

Although many in Estonia and elsewhere in the rural Baltic would recognize this tenet of herding culture, "Helletused" is also keyed to a very particular childhood memory, that of Aino Tamm (1864–1945). Tamm was the first professional singer in Estonia, and like many of her generation, she learned traditional herding calls and folksongs in childhood. The first call in the largely wordless "Helletused"—"allea"—is one of Tamm's own yodel-like calls from her youth. This motif is particularly famous in Estonian folk music, as it first appeared in "Lauliku lapsepõli," or "The Singer's Childhood," a beloved folksong setting that was composed for Tamm by Miina Harma (1864–1941), the country's first professional composer. Tormis brings this connection of inspiration and collaboration full circle by quoting the first line of "Lauliku lapsepõli" in "Helletused"; amid the frenzied call-and-response riffing of the two soprano soloists, a quartet interjects with the only text in the piece: "Kui ma olin väiksekene" ("When I was a little one"). As Harma's piece details how a singer learned songs and words from the natural world around her, we may intuit that Tormis found similar inspiration not only in his country's folk traditions but also in the creative work done by his predecessors.

or our acoustic environment. "Sun" takes us on a vivid multilingual, acoustical voyage that traces the sun's daily path from East to West, beginning with a richly colored dawn and ending quietly, as the day's last light slips past the far horizon.

In addition to building unconventional listening experiences, Schafer is known for creating compositions that break the boundaries of traditional music notation. "Sun" is a prime example: as seen below, the handwritten score has illustrations but few complete music staves and almost no standard tempo or meter markings.



For singers and listeners alike, Schafer challenges us to reconsider how music is created—and whether, like the sun, music might be another elemental force, too expansive to be contained by our conventions.

ohísama: Japan  
taiyó: Japan  
taiya: China (Cantonese)  
taiyang: China (Mandarin)  
jíto: China (colloquial)  
taiyáo: China (Teochew)  
machoi: Vietnam  
adláu: Phillipines  
aráu: Phillipines  
prahatíd: Thailand  
ira: Sri Lanka  
matahári: Indonesia  
hé: Korea  
shujá: Bangladesh  
suriá: India (Marathi)  
khorshíd: Persia  
shams: Pakistan (Urdu)  
utu: Iraq (Sumerian)  
shámshu: Iraq (Akkadian)  
shémesh: Israel (Hebrew)

shémsha: Syria (Aramaic)  
zun: Yiddish  
sóntse: Ukraine  
júá: Kenya (Swahili)  
soáre: Romania  
izúba: Rwanda  
akasúba: Zambia (Bemba)  
anyáng: Nigeria (Ibo)  
risáse: Kenya (Kisil)  
günes: Turkey  
áwia: Ghana (Twi)  
limi: Tanzania (Ksukuma)  
ílios: Greece  
súnko: Czechoslovakia  
sonne: Germany  
sóle: Italy  
soleil: France  
sol: Spain, Portugal, Latin America  
sun: England, Canada, United States

redzēj' kāvus karojam,  
Ē, redzēj' kāvus karojam;

I have seen the kingdoms at war,  
I have seen the kingdoms at war;

Karo kāvi pie debesu,  
vedīs karus mūs' zemē;  
Ē, vedīs karus mūs' zemē.

The kingdoms are at war near the heavens,  
and I fear they will bring this war to us.  
I fear they will bring this war to us.

*Text by Charles Francis Hall (1821–1871)*

It was night, and I had gone on deck several times. Iceberg was silent; I too was silent. It was true dark and cold. At nine o'clock I was below in my cabin, when the captain hailed me with the words: "Come above, Hall, come above at once, Hall! The world is on fire!"

I knew his meaning, and, quick as thought, I rushed to the companion stairs. In a moment I reached the deck, and as the cabin door swung open, a dazzling light, overpowering light burst upon my startled senses! Oh, the whole sky was one glowing mass of colored flames, so mighty, so brave! Like a pathway of light the northern lights seemed to draw us into the sky.

*Text by Fridtjof Nansen (1861–1930)*

Yes, it was harp-music, wild storming in the darkness; the strings trembled and sparkled in the glow of the flames like a shower of fiery darts. A fiery crown of auroral light cast a warm glow across the arctic ice.

Again at times it was like softly playing, gently rocking, silvery waves, on which dreams travel into unknown worlds.

\*These notes gratefully adapted from the Providence Singers.

### Mountain Nights

As with Tormis, generations of singers have looked to Zoltán Kodály for music with a strong sense of place. The Hungarian composer is revered today for his prolific compositions, his ground-breaking pedagogy, and his legacy as a champion of folk tunes and traditions. Beyond his academic interest in vernacular music, however, Kodály was genuinely rooted in the places and people his work represents. Kodály loved mountainous regions, often spending holidays in the Hungarian Mátra or in the Swiss Alps. "Mountains," he told his biographer László Eöszé, "have their own songs." Rather than quote a folk tune, "Mountain Nights," a brief, wordless soundscape for women's voices, seems to carry the very music of the hills themselves: a steady wind, a thrilling peak, and a lone bird, singing plaintively into the empty night.

### Sun

R. Murray Schafer is a Canadian composer, writer, scholar, educator, and environmentalist. Born in 1933, Schafer has explored diverse styles over the course of his compositional career, including neoclassicism, serialism, and the musical-theatrical. As a scholar and environmentalist, he has pioneered ideas about acoustic ecology—that is, how human art, life, and health are shaped by our soundscape,

### Rakastava

Finnish composer and violinist Jean Sibelius is widely known as the country's greatest composer, helping Finland to develop a national identity during its struggle for independence from Russia. "Rakastava," one of Sibelius's most substantial *a cappella* works, first appeared as an entry in a composition contest organized by Helsinki University's men's chorus in 1894, where it received second prize. Sibelius reworked the piece several times, including a version for strings, timpani, and triangle. The text for the SATB version comes from the *Kanteletar* ("Goddess of the Zither"), a collection of Finnish folk poetry by Elias Lönnrot. In three continuous movements, the story unfolds as a lone man searches for his beloved, imagining how her beauty enhances the natural world that surrounds him and reminiscing fondly about their romantic encounters.

*Text by Elias Lönnrot (1802–1884)*

Miss' on kussa minun hyväni,  
miss' asuvi armahani,  
missä istuvi iloni,  
kula maalla marjaseni?

Where, O where is my good one,  
where dwells my dear one  
where does she sit, my joy,  
in what land, little berry?

Ei kuulu ääntävän ahoilla,  
lyövän leikkiä lehoissa,  
ei kuulu saloilta soitto,  
kukunta ei kunnahilta.

Not a sound is heard in the meadows,  
nor playing in the grove,  
no ringing is heard from the backwoods,  
no cuckooing from the hills.

Oisko armas astumassa,  
marjani matelemassa,  
oma kulta kulkemassa,  
valkia vaeltamassa;

If my darling were stepping,  
my berry creeping,  
my own precious walking,  
my white one wandering;

Toisin torveni puhuisi,  
vaaran rinnat vastoaisi,  
saisi salot sanelemista,  
joka kumpu kukkumista,  
lehot leikkiä pitäisi,  
ahot ainaista iloa.

My horn would sound differently,  
the hill's slopes would echo  
the backwoods would have something to say,  
every mound something to cuckoo,  
the groves would be playful,  
and the meadows would be ever joyful.

Täst' on kulta kulkenunna,  
täst' on mennyt mieltietty,  
tästä armas astununna,  
valkia vaeltanunna,  
täss' on astunut aholda,  
tuoss' on istunut kivellä,  
kivi on paljo kirkahampi,  
paasi toistansa parempi,  
kangas kahta kaunihimpi,  
lehto viittä lempiämpi,  
korpi kuutta kukkahampi,  
koko metsä mieluisampi,

This way my precious has passed,  
from here my sweetheart has gone,  
here my true love has stepped,  
my white one has wandered,  
here she has stepped in the clearing,  
there she has sat on a rock,  
the rock is now much brighter,  
its appearance much better than the others,  
the heath twice as fair,  
the grove five times gentler,  
the wilderness six times more flowery,  
the entire forest more pleasant,

tuon on kultani kulusta,  
armahani astunasta.

from my precious one's passing through,  
my dear one's stepping there.

Hyvää iltaa lintuseni,  
hyvää iltaa kultaseni,  
hyvää iltaa nyt minun oma armahani!

Good evening, my little bird,  
good evening, my precious,  
good evening now, my own dear one!

Tansi, tansi lintuseni,  
tansi, tansi kultaseni,  
tansi, tansi nyt minun oma armahani!

Dance, dance, my little bird,  
dance, dance, my precious,  
dance, dance now, my own dear one!

Seiso, seiso lintuseni,  
seiso, seiso kultaseni,  
seiso, seiso nyt minun oma armahani!

Stand still, stand still, my little bird,  
stand still, stand still, my precious,  
stand still, stand still now, my own dear one!

Anna kättä lintuseni,  
anna kättä kultaseni,  
anna kättä nyt minun oma armahani!

Give me your hand, my little bird,  
give me your hand, my precious,  
give me your hand now, my own dear one!

Käsi kaulaan lintuseni,  
käsi kaulaan kultaseni,  
halausta kultaseni,  
halausta nyt minun oma armahani!

Take me in your arms, my little bird,  
take me in your arms, my precious,  
embrace me, my precious,  
embrace me now, my own dear one!

Suuta, suuta lintuseni,  
suuta, suuta kultaseni.

Kiss me, my little bird,  
kiss me, my precious.

Jää hyvästi lintuseni,  
jää hyvästi kultaseni,  
jää hyvästi nyt minun oma armahani!

Farewell, my little bird,  
farewell, my precious,  
farewell now, my own dear one!

### **My love dwelt in a Northern land**

Although known primarily for his orchestral works, English composer Edward Elgar composed a number of choral pieces throughout his career. He seemed to have enjoyed doing so as a form of relaxation between larger projects. One of his earliest choral compositions, “My love dwelt in a Northern land” was composed shortly after he married his wife, Alice. Perhaps this accounts for the pervading sense of joy in the music, despite the rather melancholy text by Scottish poet and fairy tale collector Andrew Lang. Alice, in fact, wrote an alternate text for the piece when it seemed Lang intended to refuse permission for use of the text—though thankfully, he finally relented, in Elgar’s words, “with a very bad grace.”

*Text by Andrew Lang (1844–1912)*

My love dwelt in a Northern land,  
A dim tower in a forest green  
Was his, and far away the sand  
And gray wash of the waves were seen  
The woven boughs between:

And through the Northern summer night  
The sunset slowly, slowly died away,  
And herds of strange deer, silver-white,  
Came gleaming through the forest gray,  
And fled like ghosts before the day.  
And oft that month, we watch'd the moon  
Wax great and white o'er wood and lawn,  
And wane, with waning of the June,  
Till, like a brand for battle drawn,  
She fell, she fell, and flamed in a wild dawn.  
I know not if the forest green  
Still girdles round that castle gray,  
I know not if the boughs between  
The white deer vanish ere the day:  
The grass above my love is green,  
His heart is colder than the clay.

### **Northern Lights**

Should we imagine ourselves in the wild, untrammelled North, surely the frozen ground would be dwarfed only by the wide expanse of sky. There we might glimpse the *aurora borealis*, or the Northern Lights: the planet's largest optical phenomenon and a dazzling sight that has entranced generations of thrill-seekers, from modern cosmologists to early Arctic explorers to earlier peoples who would have seen in the fiery skies an echo of the newly harnessed flame that illuminated their dreams and fueled their skirmishes. Latvian composer Ēriks Ešņvalds's fleeting first glimpse of the aurora propelled him to pursue the phenomena further in Norway. There, lying in a field of snow and equipped with borrowed photographic equipment, Ešņvalds spent an entire night with the Northern Lights. He recorded the aurora-evening sounds of whales, birds, and frost breaking on trees; he consulted planetary scientists and explored folkloric accounts. And he composed.

Ešņvalds's “Northern Lights” uses tuned water glasses to conjure the ethereal music of the crystal spheres. The work begins with a soft choral hum beneath a solo voice offering a fragment of Latvian folksong likening the aurora to an immense heavenly battle. The chorus moves from folklore to more modern descriptions by American explorer Charles Francis Hall (1821–1871) and Norwegian explorer and Nobel laureate Fridtjof Nansen (1861–1930). Hall wrote extensively about his voyages above the Arctic Circle, describing the aurora as a “dazzling light, overpowering light [that] burst upon my senses!” Chimes join the tuned water glasses as the narrative transitions from Hall to Nansen, who sees the aurora as music wrought in light: harp music and strings that “trembled and sparkled in the glow of the flames.” Evocative though they are, these scientists' attempts at description are no match for the immensity of the aurora: Ešņvalds retreats from efforts at literal depiction, leaving us with a reprise of the prayer-like folksong and the unearthly, shimmering sound of the tuned water glasses.\*

Cik naksnīnas pret ziemeli

How many nights in the north,